



Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony in opposition to
House Bill 5734 An Act Allowing Naturopaths to Prescribe Certain Drugs
Public Health Committee
February 20, 2013

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the almost 7,000 physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today in opposition to House Bill 5734 AN Act Allowing Naturopaths to Prescribe Certain Drugs. This proposal is potentially dangerous and not in the interest of public safety.

We respect the fact that naturopathy has been in existence for more than 100 years. However, national reviews by the American Medical Association and other organizations demonstrate that the training of naturopaths does not provided the education and training necessary to provide comfort in their ability to prescribe, dispense or administer the levels of medication contained in this legislation.

Compared to medical school and residency training, a naturopathic education consists of relatively few hours of study on pharmacological treatment of disease, and provides virtually no clinical reinforcement of pharmaceutical intervention on patients during clinical rotations or optional-post graduate training. In fact, most drugs are considered toxic by naturopaths so alternative treatments are instead "prescribed."

Naturopathy - by its very definition as a "natural modality" based on the belief that the human body has an innate healing ability - pays almost no attention to pharmacological treatment, education or continuing naturopathic medical education(CNME). Even limiting the classification of medications that a naturopath can prescribe to eliminate controlled substances can leave dire effects. Even these classes contain powerful substances that have contraindications far beyond the knowledge of a naturopath. For example, even some naturopathic-recommended treatments, such as using St. John's Wort for HIV-positive individuals, have been found by the National Institutes of Health to interact with protease inhibitors and significantly decrease their concentration in the blood.

The potential impact of this scope of practice change deserves of more clinical evaluation than a legislative hearing. Under the leadership of this committee, the General Assembly enacted Public Act 11-207 to establish an independent process through the Department of Public Health to create a Scope of Practice Review committee. This process has proven beneficial in addressing several medical issues since its enactment. Increasing the ability for Naturopaths to prescribe certain medications as contained in this bill has broad implications for patient safety. As such, it should be vetted through a review process consisting of educated and informed colleagues.

Please oppose House Bill 5734 and require such a submission to first go through the process established by Public Act 11-207.